

## Taking Sides

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Summary: They're leaving...forever. But Hiccup's planned journey goes awry as he learns that he must break his promise to take sides in the war that was once his parent's. AU. K for now. May be rated T for violence later. Chapter 3.

### 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*A/N:** All right, this was a story born of the ever-popular theory: "What if Hiccup really did leave Berk?" However, I'm taking a little spin on that...if the title doesn't tell you, just wait until the next chapters. Starts like the movie, but deviates dramatically! Enjoy!\*\*

## Taking Sides

"Leaving. We're leaving. Let's pack up, buddy. Looks like you and me are taking a little vacationâ€¦foreverâ€¦"

Hiccup meandered through the seemingly empty cove, with a basket slung over his shoulder and donning his riding harness. The basket stunk of fish, and Hiccup wrinkled his nose, wondering how much more it would smell after three days at sea. Hopefully they would be able to land somewhere before that happened. He shook his head. How could any of this have happened? Hiccup never imagined leaving Berk, and here he was, abandoning his home for an unknown fate. The prospect almost made him change his mind and stick it out. But on the other hand, if he stayed, he would have to kill a dragon. That was unacceptable now.

"Oh, boy." Hiccup hoisted the basket onto the ground and flipped it open. He stood, tugging on his leather straps, when a scraping sound made him look up.

\_Oh, gods!\_

Astrid sat on the boulder next to the basket, sharpening her ax on a whetstone. She did not acknowledge him, but Hiccup leaped backwards in shock. "AAH! What theâ€" He quickly composed himself and tried to act normal, even though his heart thudded like a drum. "Uh, what are you doing here?"

She dropped the stone next to her, and it clacked as it bounced down to the ground. "No reason." She stood up on the rock, casting a shadow over Hiccup as she glared at him. "Just a certain boy with a lucky streak and a few tricks up his sleeve happens to be humiliating me in front of the entire villageâ€|you haven't seen him, have you?"

Hiccup swallowed. "Look, I'm sorry about the ringâ€"

Astrid laughed. "Sorry? And that'll make everything all right, won't it?" She leaped down, and gave him a little shove. "So, what's the secret, Mister Dragon Tamer?"

Hiccup started to panic. "Secret? Uhâ€| Astrid's icy blue gaze made it hard to think of an evasive response. "Justâ€|inspiration, I guess."

She rolled her eyes. "Right. Like \_you \_could come up with any of that out of thin air." She glanced around the cove. "Do you have a teacher or something?"

He was getting desperate now. "I kind of, um, train myself hereâ€"umâ€" Couldn't he come up with anything better than "um?" He could hear a soft rumbling from behind him, the familiar growl. \_Just stay down, budâ€|\_ "There's really nothing elseâ€|"

Astrid didn't fall for it. "You have ten seconds," she hissed, "to tell me what you've been doing before I gut you like a fish." She lifted her ax threateningly.

"The truthâ€|" Hiccup wracked his brains. "The truth isâ€|" But before he could make up a story, Astrid gasped. She seized Hiccup by the arm and threw him backwards. "Get back!" Hiccup tripped backwards, falling in the dirt and watching as Astrid chargedâ€"

Oh, no.

A black dragon with outstretched wings towered over the girl, snarling and thrashing his tail. "Toothless! Toothless, no!" Hiccup leapt up in vain. His hands closed over Astrid's, clenched on the handle, and steered it away. But not before the blade of the ax carved a gash in Toothless' scaly black hide. He squawked and faltered, hitting the ground.

"NOOO!"

The scream tore out of him without thought at the sight of his friend's blood. He whirled around and faced Astrid, who was watching him with a mixture of confusion and disgust. "How could you!" he cried. Toothless snarled, still trying to get up and defend Hiccup.

"Whaâ€"?" She was speechless. "How could I? What in the name of Thorâ€"?"

Hiccup tuned her out. Tearing a strip from his tunic, he made a makeshift bandage from the cloth. It was quickly soaked. "Youâ€"he wasâ€" He could barely talk. He turned to look at her again. A fierce fire flared up inside of him. "You want to know why I got so good?" he shouted. "It was him! We made friends! I shot him down in the woods and I couldn't kill him, so I justâ€"Iâ€"I let him go, and youâ€"! "

"You \_what?\_"

Again, Hiccup ignored the horror in her voice. "And you can go back and tell everyone that I'm done," he continued. "I'm sick of this. Killing dragons is wrong. I am not a Viking." It both hurt and healed to say the words out loud. He glared at her before saying, "We're going, Toothless."

Astrid closed her mouth and squinted at him. "Going? Going where?"

"Away from here."

She raised her eyebrows. "Good luck with that." Her voice had gone back to its cold indifference. With one last malevolent look over her shoulder, she turned and raced away to the entrance of the cove.

He didn't have much time. Hiccup knelt next to his friend, who had gone from growling to whining. "Toothless, are you all right?" Tears filled his eyes as Toothless met them with big, wide ones.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, budâ€|" He lifted his eyes and stared after the crunching footfalls leaving the cove. "I'll get her for this," he hissed. "I'll get her for this if it's the last thing I do."

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid's puffing breath preceded her appearance in the village. The remnants of the celebration were being cleaned up in the hall as she banged through the doors.<p>

"Stoick!" she gasped. "I have to talk to Stoick!"

The Viking leader turned to see her figure in the doorway. He raised an eyebrow and stepped away from his well-wishers. "What is it?" he said in a low voice.

It took a moment before she could catch her breath. "It's all a trick," she whispered. "Hiccup. He made friends with dragons. He tried to stop me from killing one."

Stoick's face went pale. "What? No, that can't be."

Astrid held up her ax in response, still stained with the dragon's blood. "I got it in the neck before he pushed me back."

The Chief studied the ax. For a minute, he seemed to be in complete denial. Then his face hardened.

"I knew it," he hissed. "All this timeâ€|where is he now?"

"He said he was leaving Berk."

Astrid could almost see the battle within Stoick, the fatherly side waging war against the Viking side.

The Viking side won.

"Get ready, men," he called out. The talking in the hall stopped. "We have a miscreant to catch."

\* \* \*

><p>The wind howled in Hiccup's ears. He clutched the saddle tighter, listening to the labored flapping of Toothless' wings. The cove became a distant dot beneath them as they rode higher into the sky. Toothless grunted in pain, and Hiccup felt the wound twinge as if it were his own.<p>

"We're almost there, bud," he told Toothless. "We just need to get over to the rocksâ€|then we can rest." Hiccup didn't want to put his dragon under any stress after Astrid's attack, but they didn't have much of a choice. Leave and risk worsening the cut, or stay and die.

Hiccup chose to leave.

"HICCUP!"

For crying out loudâ€|it was Stoick. Hiccup turned in his seat. A small band of Vikings stood at the edge of the island, watching the two of them fly away. Astrid must have told them what Toothless looked like. As much as he would have liked to ignore them and leave, Hiccup turned Toothless around and brought them closer to the cliff, where he hovered. "What do you want?" Had he changed his mind?

Stoick seemed taken aback at the sight of his son riding a dragon, but he brushed it off. "What do you think you're doing?" he roared over the strong breeze. "Come back here right now!"

Hiccup's heart sank. "No, Dad. I have to do this. I'm through."

"Youâ€|how could you do this? You're friends with the devils?"

"They're not devils, Dad!" Hiccup said angrily. Toothless sank lower in the sky, the effort of flapping in one place sapping his strength. "Just look! Would a devil let me do this? Would a devil spare my life after I shot him down?" He spotted Astrid standing behind him, and that only added fuel to his rant. "I'm going," he said with finality. "And there's nothing you can do about it, Dad."

With that, Hiccup turned Toothless back toward the ocean. Toothless was breathing hard now, and it was all Hiccup could do to keep from turning around and landing back on Berk. "Hiccup!" He ignored the shout, and soon his home was a mountain peeking over the horizon. Toothless' claws touched down on the rock pillars dotting the sea, and Hiccup jumped off in a rush. His dragon collapsed with exhaustion.

"Toothless! Toothless, are you OK?" He snorted in response. His skin was hot and sweaty to the touch. \_Oh, please don't let it get infected. \_Hiccup had neither the means nor the knowledge to be a doctor right now. He fed Toothless a small fish and sat down next to him.

Now what? They had nowhere to go. Hiding in the forest or the mountains was not an option. Hiccup had not envisioned an injury when he had decided on leaving, but, then again, it hadn't made much of a difference. He wasn't welcome on Berk, and there was no other choice but to go find another island. He had heard of many other Tribes that lived elsewhere, but he didn't have a clue where they were. Unlessâ€|no. Hiccup shook the thought away. He had told himself he wouldn't take sides in this war. That was not an option.

A small croaking sounded by his feet. Hiccup looked down at the stone and was surprised to find a Terrible Terror nudging his boot. It peeped and watched him with bulging yellow eyes. It was the same one he had made friends with the day before, after Toothless' test drive. Behind it were three more: red, yellow and green. They looked at Toothless with interest. The Night Fury managed a half-hearted growl of annoyance before flopping his head down. The tiny dragons poked at his chest, chirping, and looked back at Hiccup. The lead one tugged at Hiccup's sleeve with his gums.

"Not now, little guy," he muttered. But the creature was insistent, squeaking and pulling him to his knees. The others licked Toothless' wound and squeaked as well.

Hiccup started to get an inkling of what they wanted him to do. "No," he said. "No, I can't do that. I promisedâ€|" But then Toothless moaned, and he was forcibly reminded of the time he had been tied in ropes, his tail fin freshly torn off. He couldn't bear the thought. Hiccup sighed.

"All right. Fine. Let's go."

It took coaxing to get Toothless back up again, but eventually the dragon got to his feet. Then they were in the air, for what Hiccup hoped would be the last time he would have to make him fly while wounded. The Terrible Terrors fluttered in front of him, occasionally glancing back to make sure he was following them. Dread grew in Hiccup's gut with every wingbeat. Soon, a bank of fog loomed overhead. Toothless perked up, his ears flat against his skull. He began to fly faster, and Hiccup struggled to hold on. The group plunged into the mist, and rock pillars jumped out at them from every side. But Toothless dodged them all, and soon Hiccup heard clicking and growling. A tall, dark mountain stabbed into the gray sky, pouring molten rock. It could only be one thing.

The dragons' nest.

Shapes emerged from the fog around them. A Gronckle buzzed on Hiccup's left; a Zippleback on his right. They huffed and growled, and Toothless rumbled back. Hiccup pressed himself against the saddle and prayed that they wouldn't see him. What had he been thinking? Once they saw him, they would just eat him. It would all be in vain. He urged Toothless to turn around, but he shook his head and growled. "Thor help me," Hiccup breathed, panicked.

The dragons seemed to use some sort of instinct to find the way through the maze of rocks. More than once he was nearly thrown off by a sudden turn. Then, Toothless flung himself into a hidden tunnel in the side of the mountain. A blazing heat permeated the stone walls, and an orange light suffused the smoky air as the dragons emerged into a large cavern, apparently filling the entire volcano. Hundreds of dragons, every size, shape, and color, lined the walls of the nest.

When he said he wasn't coming back, Hiccup hadn't been thinking of suicide.

**\*\*Well, there's the first chapter! I might not update this as frequently as I would like to, with my other stories going, but I'll try my best. Unless you guys want to vote priority...? \*raise eyebrow\*\*\***

**\*\*As always, please review, and thank you for kicking up the traffic stats meter! \*\***

## 2. Chapter 2

**\*\*A/N: This is my way of making it up to you guys for leaving my stories alone so long. Chapter 2, read, review, and most importantly, enjoy!\*\***

\_This was a bad idea.\_

So thought Hiccup as he watched Toothless in a cave off of the main cavern in the dragon's nest, being worked on by an old Nadder. He could tell its age because of the lusterless scales and rheumy yellow eyes, of which a Deadly Nadder was usually extremely proud of. This one seemed defeated.

Hiccup was only alive because of Toothless' status. They had moved in on him when he dismounted, but Toothless had released such a ferocious growl that they retreated. They continued to watch him, even now, with narrowed eyes.

The Nadder finished spreading whatever medicinal herb it had on the wound, and before it could move away, Toothless lifted his head and rumbled softly. The Nadderâ€¦\_nodded?...and moved away to take flight at the edge of the cave.

Hiccup leaped next to his friend. "Toothless! Toothless, are you all right?" The dragon looked at him with bright, clear eyes. He looked much better than he had a few hours ago. He nudged Hiccup's face and purred.

"Toothless, we can't stay here, you know."

His dragon looked at him in surprise. Though Hiccup knew he couldn't talk, he fantasized that Toothless could speak for the moment, something he did often.

\_Why not?\_

"These are \_dragons,\_ Toothless. You know they wouldn'tâ€¦I

meanâ€| "

Cock of the head. \_I can protect you.\_

Hiccup shook his head. "Yeah, but for how long?"

Growl. \_As long as it takes.\_

"Takes for what?" he sighed, scuffing his boot on the rocks. "For them to accept me? I'm a Viâ€a human." He nearly slipped and called himself what he would never be.

\_Trust me. \_Toothless pushed his nose under Hiccup's arm. \_I know what I'm doing.\_

Hiccup became aware of another, heavier huffing under his dragon's own. Something loomed behind him, and he whirled around, ready to defend himself from the impending threat.

He gasped.

At the cave's mouth stood an enormous dragon, a Monstrous Nightmare twenty feet long from nose to tail-tip. It was bicolored blue and red, with eyes such a bright shade of amber they looked orange. Hiccup's throat closed up in fright, and he scrambled backwards. He was going to regret coming here, he was sure of it.

However, the Monstrous Nightmare didn't attack, but simply regarded him, as though he were an insignificant speck of meat that would hardly make a good meal. For the first time, Hiccup was grateful for his lack of muscle. Then the dragon stared at Toothless with something close to disgust. The Night Fury growled under his scrutiny, but it hardly made the other back down. This one obviously held a higher rank.

\_Don't you "what?" me.\_

Hiccup started. Nobody had moved their jaws. If he had to guessâ€|\_no way!\_

Toothless growled again.

\_You've got nerve, Night Fury. \_

They wereâ€|talking.

The Monstrous Nightmare's lips curled over his teeth in a soundless snarl. \_You're not going to get away with this. You're lucky the Great One hasn't seen it yet.\_

The exchange wasn't the same as when Hiccup envisioned Toothless talkingâ€that was his own imaginationâ€but it was similar. The words were spoken in a hissing growl reminiscent of boiling water. Try as he might, Hiccup couldn't hear his own dragon speaking.

\_And you've gotten yourself attached to it. Literally, \_the dragon added, glancing contemptuously at the replacement tail. \_Shameful. You let the thing ride you?\_

"Hey! "

Hiccup immediately regretted saying it. The dragon turned on him.

\_Ahâ€¦I had forgotten. \_The voice was quieter now. \_The barriers of my own speech have been erased, and that enables anything to eavesdrop. Of course, I have never made contact with â€¦horned-person before. \_He spat the word out like a bone.

"Ummmâ€¦" Hiccup wasn't quite sure how to respond. Horned-person? He must have meant "Viking."

\_Your kind is so literate, \_he growled sarcastically. The dragon moved closer. \_But I digress. Why have you come here?\_

Hiccup gestured at Toothless' wound. "Uhâ€¦he was injured, and I thoughtâ€¦wellâ€¦"

In a blur, the dragon's tail swept under his boots and knocked him to the ground. Three claws closed over him like a cage.

Toothless' jaws clapped together as he snapped at the Monstrous Nightmare and roared. He barely looked up.

\_No more games, horned-person! \_he snarled. \_Why are you here?\_

Hiccup's heart sank. Why was he here? "I'veâ€¦" He took a breath. "I've renounced them."

The dragon froze, his tail in mid-swing.

\_What?\_

"I'm not a horned-person anymore." He jerked his chin, the only part of him that could move, at Toothless. "One of them cut my dragon with an ax. She'sâ€¦I don't belong with them anymore. So," he added, half-hopefully, "if you don't want me hereâ€¦"

The talons slithered as they withdrew. Hiccup gasped for air.

\_Really, \_the dragon mused. \_This has not happened for a very long timeâ€¦\_

Toothless snorted. He was fixed with a smoldering stare.

\_Last time? Last time it was a traitor of a horned-person, not much older than yours. The story is quite interestingâ€¦I should like to tell it to the two of you. But it can wait. We must see what the Great One thinks about this.\_

This time, Toothless stood up entirely, snarling.

\_Daft Night Fury. If she doesn't, it will be no loss on our part. If she doesâ€¦we will have gained much. \_Before Hiccup could react, the Monstrous Nightmare roughly seized him with his only feet.

Before his boots left the ground, he heard something rumble far



beneath him. The dragons began to hum and growl.

\_This was a bad idea.\_

Sometimes, he thought grimly, fate liked to amuse itself by going in a circle.

**\*\*Ironic twist coming up...prepare yourself.\*\***

### 3. Chapter 3

**\*\*A/N: I am a horrible, awful, awful, horrible person and I left you all hanging. I heard some really good feedback. Then I had this three-month-long case of writer's block, and I'm terribly sorry about that. But here it is, I should probably have more after so long, but...\*shrug\* enjoy! And please review as always, thanks for sticking with me!\*\***

The rag sank into the stained bucket. Crimson blossomed off of it, slowly dying the clear liquid pink. Astrid grabbed the cloth and squashed it against the wood before pulling it back out and running it over her ax again. Rivulets of water ran down the length of her blade, dropping onto the soil and soaking it.

Astrid had retained a quiet fury ever since she had watched Hiccup fly off into the sunset. Although she was being acknowledged as the runner-up, she still felt cheated out of her glory. At least she had managed to leave a stain on his reputation. Hiccup the Hero was now Hiccup the Traitor.

Shaking her ax free of droplets, Astrid stood up from the stairs leading to the mead hall and started walking through the village. The sky was growing deeper with every passing minute, and families were retreating into their houses for the night. A few stragglers nodded to her as she passed.

For the thousandth time, she relived the moment when the dragon had charged her down. It had to be a Night Fury, it just had to be. She clenched the haft of her ax as Hiccup once again shoved her out of the way. Dirty tricks and lies. That's what it all came down to.

Yet she couldn't forget the look of pain and shock on Hiccup's face when she wounded his pet dragon.

\_You would have thought it was his brother.\_

She shook herself mentally. All the more reason to spit on his name.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup was deposited on a ledge overlooking the giant pit in the center. The edge of rock was hanging up and over the hole, as though it were an honorary position, though Hiccup felt far from important. Small quakes were emanating through the walls of the cave, and the dragons withdrew themselves into their caves.<p>

The Monstrous Nightmare unhooked his claws from his matted fur vest and stepped to the edge of the stone. He growled, but it was in a

language Hiccup couldn't understand. He could see Toothless from his vantage point. The Night Fury watched him with frightened eyes, whining. But Hiccup knew that Toothless couldn't fly by himself. He settled for meeting his dragon's eyes, trying to comfort him.

The shaking grew louder and stronger. Hiccup found himself clutching at the rocks beneath him to steady himself. Peeking over the edge, he saw a giant, dark shape move within the hazy red fog. His heart thudded against his throat.

With an earth-shaking bellow, the biggest, ugliest, most powerful creature Hiccup had ever seen emerged from the abyss in the middle of the nest. He could only see its head, but that was enough to make his stomach turn. It was covered in warts, bumps, and thick spikes. The skin of the beast was a dusty blue, and its six eyes were filmy and colorless. Worst of all, they were locked on him.

Hiccup tried to scramble backwards, but his muscles were frozen. The thing roared again, making the pebbles at Hiccup's knees dance.

The Monstrous Nightmare glanced at him out of the corner of his eyes. \_She wishes to know why you have come alone.\_

"But I didn't, I came withâ€"

The dragon snarled. \_No, why you have not come with hordes of horned-people on your tail.\_

"Oh." He swallowed. "They don't exactly know I'm here."

He translated for the large dragon. \_She! \_Hiccup wanted to blurt. He couldn't imagine anything that looked less like a female.

\_The Great One has a proposition for you, \_the red and blue dragon growled.

\_Oh, joy, \_Hiccup thought.

\_Tomorrow, when the sun sets, the dragon clan shall attack the horned-person-island. If you have truly left them, you will accompany us and assist your Night Fury in the raid. \_The dragon blinked slowly. \_Whether you choose to reveal yourself to them or not is of your own choosing. If you try to run, however, you will not make it past the shore of the nest.\_

Oh, gods.

Fight against Berk. That was the last thing Hiccup had expected from a thousand-foot-long dragon.

What if he met up with Astrid? Gobber? The rest of the teens? Or evenâ€|Stoick? Did he even \_want \_to join forces with the other dragons? Just because he had wounded a Night Fury and made friends with a few Terrible Terrors did not mean he was a dragon whisperer of any sort.

The titanic dragon growled again, vibrating his chest. \_Oh, and one more thing, \_the Monstrous Nightmare added. \_If you see fit to refuse this offer, things could become veryâ€|difficult. \_With that, another Nightmare flew to the cave Toothless hid in and pinned him, with a

clawed hold over the dragon's throat.

"NO!" Hiccup yelped.

\_Choose, then.\_

He took a shaky breath. \_Sorry, everybody.\_

"I'll go with you."

The dragons surrounding them took on a more relaxed stance as the large dragon huffed.

"But," Hiccup added, "I'll only go on the condition that I don't have to kill anybody."

The red-and-blue dragon sniffed. \_You're in no position to make demands. But it shall be as you say. Keep in mind, hatchling, that if you are shot down, you may have no choice.\_

"I get it."

With another bellow, the giant slid her head back into her lair, making the fog billow and turn.

\_What have I done?\_

\*\*Yeah...I think some of you already guessed that. If there's anything you would like to see improve in this story, please PM me or something. Now go review! :)\*\*

End  
file.